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ABSTRACT

The first SERVE Regional Forum on School Improvement brought together 300 educators from Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, North Carolina, and South Carolina. These proceedings include: introductory information on SERVE, an introduction to the forum, the forum agenda, comments from participants, summaries of the keynote presentations, and overviews of the conference's 10 themes or "strands." The themes were: (1) student assessment; (2) community involvement; (3) facilitating continual improvement; (4) literacy; (5) monitoring school progress and evaluation issues; (6) parent involvement and early childhood education; (7) professional development; (8) school organization and climate; (9) teacher research; and (10) technology for teaching and learning. Presenters included teams of teachers and school/district administrators who shared their practice-based knowledge and experiences, researchers who discussed the theories and findings supporting some current models and concepts for addressing school needs and affecting change, SERVE's field-based research and development partners who described authentic implementations of promising school improvement programs and processes, and specialists from other regional laboratories and federally-funded service centers. A resources and information section contains an address list of forum participants and registration information for the 1997 forum. (ND)

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Proceedings

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SERVE Regional Forum on School Improvement

Tampa, Florida
October 6-9, 1996

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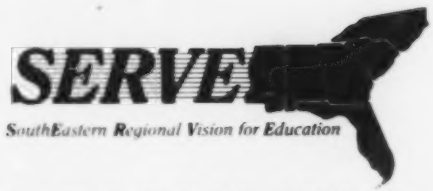
SERVE Regional Forum on School Improvement

October 6-9, 1996
Tampa, Florida

Proceedings



Associated with the School of Education,
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A Letter From the Executive Director . . .

Dear Colleagues:

On behalf of the SouthEastern Regional Vision for Education, I am pleased to share with you highlights from our first Regional SERVE Forum on School Improvement, held October 6-9, 1996, in Tampa, Florida. Throughout the four-day conference, educators joined together with stakeholders from across the Southeast to share experiences and expertise, forge new networks, and commit to the task of working together to improve our schools.

For over five years, SERVE has worked diligently to provide services and assistance to schools and districts. This first regional Forum was the perfect way to celebrate SERVE's sixth birthday and share with participants the good work being done and the progress being made in our own "backyards." The concurrent sessions were planned with participants' needs and initiatives in mind, and each targeted the issues and topics at the forefront of education. The group of presenters was composed of practitioners from the field representing SERVE's partnerships, both old and new.

We believe that everyone involved with the Forum came away with great ideas and renewed vigor for the most important task at hand in America—providing an excellent education for every child in this country.

Sincerely,

Roy H. Forbes, Ed.D.
Executive Director

Goals of the 1996 SERVE Regional Forum on School Improvement

SERVE's Mission is to promote and support the continuous improvement of educational opportunities for all learners in the Southeast.

SERVE's vision of the future of education is as beautiful and bold as the imagination, for it is within the imagination that the barriers of funding, partisanship, inequity, and bureaucracy dissolve with ease. Our vision includes you, the people whose daily efforts impact children, parents, and teachers. There is untapped energy in your individual efforts, and it is our belief that sharing innovations and building partnerships strengthen the foundations on which we work and offer guideposts to keep us focused.

Our overarching goal for this Forum was to further impact continual school improvement.

To that end we strove to

- Provide awareness of SERVE and our services
- Showcase successful programs and R&D initiatives
- Encourage adoption of new programs and practices across the region
- Identify areas of need and establish key contacts
- Enhance the capacity of teams and individuals to provide intensive support for continual school improvement
- Connect participants with the regional network of federally-funded service providers

About the SERVE Organization

SERVE, the SouthEastern Regional Vision for Education, is a consortium of educational organizations whose mission is to promote and support the continual improvement of educational opportunities for all learners in the Southeast. Formed by a coalition of business leaders, governors, policymakers, and educators seeking systemic, lasting improvement in education, the organization is governed and guided by a Board of Directors that includes the chief state school officers, governors, and legislative representatives from Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, North Carolina, and South Carolina. Committed to creating a shared vision of the future of education in the Southeast, the consortium impacts educational change by addressing critical educational issues in the region, acting as a catalyst for positive change and serving as a resource to individuals and groups striving for comprehensive school improvement.

SERVE's core component is a regional educational laboratory funded since 1990 by the Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI), U.S. Department of Education. Building from this core, SERVE has developed a system of programs and initiatives that provides a spectrum of resources, services, and products for responding effectively to national, regional, state, and local needs. SERVE is a dynamic force, transforming national education reform strategies into progressive policies and viable initiatives at all levels. SERVE Laboratory programs and key activities are centered around

- Applying research and development related to improving teaching, learning, and organizational management
- Serving the educational needs of young children and their families more effectively
- Providing field and information services to promote and assist local implementation of research-based practices and programs
- Offering policy services, information, and assistance to decision makers concerned with developing progressive educational policy
- Connecting educators to a regional computerized communication system, so that they may search for and share information, and network
- Developing and disseminating publications and products designed to give educators practical information and the latest research on common issues and problems

The Eisenhower Consortium for Mathematics and Science Education at SERVE is part of the national infrastructure for the improvement of mathematics and science education sponsored by OERI. The consortium coordinates resources, disseminates exemplary instructional materials, and provides technical assistance for implementing teaching methods and assessment tools.

The SouthEast and Islands Regional Technology in Education Consortium (SEIR◆TEC) serves 14 states and territories. A seven-member partnership led by SERVE, the consortium offers a variety of services to foster the infusion of technology into K-12 classrooms. The Region IV Comprehensive Assistance Center provides a coordinated, comprehensive approach to technical assistance through its partnership with SERVE.

A set of special purpose institutes completes the system of SERVE resources. These institutes provide education stakeholders extended site-based access to high quality professional development programs, evaluation and assessment services, training and policy development to improve school safety, and subject area or project-specific planning and implementation assistance to support clients' school improvement goals.

Following the distributive approach to responding and providing services to its customers, SERVE has ten offices in the region. The North Carolina office at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro is headquarters for the Laboratory's executive services and operations. Policy offices are located in the departments of education in Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, North Carolina, and South Carolina.

SERVE Offices

SERVE–Alabama

Policy
Office forthcoming—please call any Serve Policy office for assistance

SERVE–Florida

Early Childhood, Publications, Lab, Field Services
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Tallahassee, FL 32301
904-671-6000
800-352-6001
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Fax 904-671-6010
SERVE-Line (modem only)
800-487-7605

Eisenhower Consortium for Mathematics and Science Education at SERVE
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Suite E-22
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904-671-6033
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Policy
345 South Magnolia Drive
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Fax 904-671-6020

Florida Commissioner of Education's Office
The Capitol
LL 24
Tallahassee, FL 32399
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Fax 904-488-1492

SERVE–Georgia

Technology
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Atlanta, GA 30303
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SERVE-Line (modem only)
800-487-7605

Policy
Georgia Department of Education
2054 Twin Towers East
Atlanta, GA 30334
404-657-0148
Fax 404-651-5231

SERVE-Mississippi

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Delta State University
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800-326-4548
Fax 601-846-4402

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Jackson, MS 39205
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Fax 910-334-4671

Evaluation and Assessment Services
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800-755-3277
Fax 910-334-3268

Professional Development Institute (PDI)
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Fax 910-334-4671

Southeastern Regional Safe Schools Institute
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Greensboro, NC 27435
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Fax 910-334-4671

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Ms. Deborah Williams, Institutional Liaison, Office of Educational Research and Improvement

Forum Introduction

On October 6-9, 1996, SERVE held its first Regional Forum on School Improvement at the Hyatt Regency Westshore in Tampa, Florida. Planned to bring together educators from Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, North Carolina, and South Carolina, this event was attended by three hundred eager and energetic teachers, school and district administrators, state agency representatives, teacher educators, and staff from other education laboratories and assistance centers serving the region. The major events of the Forum were organized around ten themes, or strands, that comprise the critical elements of school improvement in which the SERVE Laboratory is frequently asked to assist schools, districts, state education agencies, and other clients:

- Student Assessment
- Community Involvement
- Facilitating Continual Improvement
- Literacy
- Monitoring School Progress and Evaluation Issues
- Parent Involvement and Early Childhood Education
- Professional Development
- School Organization and Climate
- Teacher Research
- Technology for Teaching and Learning

The Forum was designed to provide opportunities for participants to learn from each other, to benchmark their school improvement efforts with other successful schools in the Southeast, and to discuss and evaluate the latest in school improvement methods, information resources, and research for possible inclusion in their plans. Presenters for the various sessions on each theme included teams of teachers and school/district administrators who shared their practice-based knowledge and experiences, researchers who discussed the theories and findings supporting some current models and concepts for addressing school needs and affecting change, and SERVE's field-based research and development partners who described authentic implementations of promising school improvement programs and processes. Specialists from other regional laboratories and federally-funded service centers shared information about the resources they have available for all schools.

Through one-on-one conversations, group discussions, and in-depth multi-media presentations, participants from each state joined together to focus on regional, statewide, and national objectives for lasting change in schools. So intense was their concentration and involvement with these activities that they seemed oblivious to an unscheduled brush with tropical storm Josephine that pelted the Tampa Bay area with winds that exceeded 70 miles per hour on Monday afternoon. We did, however, happen upon one Forum group that was building towers as a team building exercise as they looked out at the white-capped waves rising in the bay below.

The Forum's Sunday evening dinner program and the mid-day luncheons on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday were greatly anticipated, not only for the incredible food prepared by the Hyatt staff but also for the outstanding keynote presentation speakers. Four nationally recognized leaders in education shared their profound knowledge of life in classrooms, student assessment, professional development, and the demographic challenges facing schools in the Southeast. Delivering thought-provoking presentations were Ms. Kay Toliver, an elementary teacher in New York City Public Schools; Dr. Beverly Farr, Director of the Region XI Comprehensive Assistance Center, WestEd Laboratory, San Francisco; Dr. Daniel Duke, Director of the Thomas Jefferson Center for Educational Design, University of Virginia, Charlottesville; and Dr. Harold Hodgkinson from the Center for Demographic Policy, Institute for Educational Leadership, Washington, D.C.

Based on the magnitude of response, the many positive comments shared by participants, and the results of the comprehensive evaluation, the Forum has been deemed one of SERVE's most successful efforts in meeting face-to-face with a large number of primary clients and carrying out the mission of improving learning for all learners in the region. We began our planning with the belief that sharing innovations, pointing to resources, and building partnerships would expand and strengthen our connections to those responsible for local school improvement initiatives and offer guideposts to keep us focused. Participants left Tampa on October 9 with their heads full of interesting ideas to try, new professional acquaintances, and their bags full of publications and materials. The SERVE staff left with a heightened sense of accomplishment and a resolve to work even harder on those things most needed to support continual school improvement.

Planning for the 1997 Forum is already underway. The date is, again, set for early October, and the site is Atlanta, Georgia. We certainly hope that you who came in 1996 will return and bring others who wish to be part of the SERVE community of school improvement learners and leaders. A pre-registration form is included on the last page of this document. We invite you to duplicate it, share copies, fill it out, and return it immediately so that we can keep you informed of the details on the next SERVE Forum.

Betty V. Fry
Forum Co-Director

Wendy McColskey
Forum Co-Director

Forum Agenda

Sunday, October 6

1:00-5:30 pm	Forum Registration
5:30 pm	Opening Session and Dinner Program
	Presiding Roy H. Forbes, Director, SERVE
	Keynote Address Kay Toliver, Classroom Teacher, East Harlem Tech/PS 72, New York City *"Feedback for Student Improvement"*
6:45 pm	Dinner
8:00 pm	Adjourn for the Evening

Monday, October 7

7:30 am	Continental Breakfast
8:30-10:15 am	Concurrent Sessions
10:15-10:30 am	Beverage Break
10:30-11:45 am	Concurrent Sessions
12:00 noon	Luncheon Program
	Presiding Jean Williams, Coordinator, Region IV Comprehensive Assistance Center at SERVE
	Featured Speaker Dr. Beverly Farr, Director, Region XI Comprehensive Assistance Center, WestEd, San Francisco, Calif. *"Of Tests, Scales, and Standards: Why Some Children Have Trouble Measuring Up"*
1:30-2:45 pm	Concurrent Sessions
2:45-3:00 pm	Beverage Break
3:00-4:20 pm	Concurrent Sessions
4:30-5:00 pm	Team Meeting Time

Tuesday, October 8

7:30 am	Continental Breakfast
8:30-10:15 am	Concurrent Sessions
10:15-10:30 am	Beverage Break
10:30-11:45 am	Concurrent Sessions
12:00 noon	Luncheon Program
	Presiding Deborah Childs-Bowen, Director, Field Services and Professional Development, SERVE
	Featured Speaker Dr. Daniel Duke, Director, Thomas Jefferson Center for Educational Design, University of Virginia *"The Magic Kingdom of Professional Development"*
1:30-2:45 pm	Concurrent Sessions
2:45-3:00 pm	Beverage Break
3:00-4:20 pm	Concurrent Sessions
4:30-5:00 pm	Team Meeting Time

Wednesday, October 9

7:30 am	Continental Breakfast
8:30-9:30 am	State-By-State Meetings
9:30-9:45 am	Beverage Break
9:45-11:15 am	Resource Gathering: Getting to Know Your Federally Funded Service Providers
11:30 am	Luncheon Program
	Presiding Calvin Jackson, Senior Policy Analyst, SERVE Policy Office, South Carolina Department of Education
	Featured Speaker Dr. Harold Hodgkinson, Director, Center for Demographic Policy, Institute for Educational Leadership, Washington, D.C. *"Toward a New South"*
1:15-1:30 pm	Forum Closing

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Comments from Participants

"The presenters were high-energy, well-informed professionals who made me glad to be in education!"

"The session *Strengthening the School Improvement Process Through Monitoring and Evaluation* was presented professionally, with high-quality enthusiasm and competence."

"This is wonderful—a session with practical information I can use back at my school!" (*Improving Literacy Within the Total School Community*)

"In *The New Three R's in Reading and Writing: Research, Redesign, and Rubrics*, you shared my philosophy about reading and language."

"The information I learned will be shared with my colleagues as well as Level 1 school districts."

"Well done!"

"I like the way SERVE has organized the materials. I like sharing other system's successes and problems."

"I will include the information I learned in my presentations to districts and schools."

"The presenters were excellent."

"The workshop session *Continuity in Early Childhood: A Framework for the Home School and Community Linkages* was very rewarding and informative."

"*The Learning Circle: A Partnership Approach* was the most dynamic, heart warming presentation I've attended!"

"Thank you!"

"I will use the information and activities as I work to help schools reach out to the community through development and support. Great work!"

"I cannot wait to get back to my district to share this information."

"The excitement and enthusiasm of these presenters is quite inspirational!"

"Very visual! Very creative! Very exciting!"

Forum Keynote Speakers

Kay Toliver

The Forum's opening session keynote speaker was Kay Toliver, an award-winning elementary mathematics teacher at East Harlem Technical/PS 72, New York City, N.Y. In her presentation, "Feedback for Student Improvement," Ms. Toliver focused on teachers' ability to motivate their students and emphasized the importance of motivational techniques in progressive school improvement. She utilized clips of her four-part PBS educational videos, "The Kay Toliver Files" and "The Eddie Files," which have become a staple for teacher trainers across the nation. Based on her classroom practices, each video series demonstrates Ms. Toliver's dynamic, skillful, and inspiring teaching techniques, and the impact of these qualities on her students' learning.

Ms. Toliver stressed the key role that teachers play in school improvement. They must believe in their students, get to know them, and help make school a fun place for them to be. In her mathematics classes, Ms. Toliver promotes literacy equally as much as adding or subtracting. Her students must be able to write, read, and speak mathematics before they can effectively solve math problems. Each student is required to keep daily journals and math dictionaries to summarize what they have learned. These techniques not only help establish successful habits in mathematics logic but also further enhance individual student literacy. In closing, Ms. Toliver noted that we, as teachers, "must be patient. Lasting change in school improvement is slow. We must stop passing the buck and get to work."

For more information about "The Kay Toliver Files" and "The Eddie Files," call PBS Video at 800-344-3337 or write PBS Video, 1320 Braddock Place, Alexandria, VA, 22314-1698.

Dr. Beverly Farr

Dr. Farr's presentation, "Of Tests, Scales, and Standards: Why Some Children Have Trouble Measuring Up," focused on the challenges teachers face in student assessment. Beginning with a history of various assessment methods, Dr. Farr noted that the need for improvement in education is glaringly apparent and that the greatest priority of all reform must be to focus on the needs of students.

According to Dr. Farr, today's schools find themselves under enormous pressure to reform. Teachers are forced to do too many things at once, and this directly compromises student learning as classroom topics are often covered too quickly. This makes it difficult for students—especially those from another culture or that speak another language—to learn at the same pace as others.

Dr. Farr stressed that we, as educators, stand on a threshold of assessment. We need to hear ourselves asking questions about how, what, and why students must learn. More and more schools and teachers are moving from traditional assessment methods such as true/false, multiple choice, and matching tests to alternative techniques such as essays, portfolios, group projects, and journals. Implementing this type of progressive assessment and forming positive one-on-one relationships with students will help today's teachers create the type of long-lasting reform necessary for improvement in education.

Dr. Farr is nationally known in reading education and in the integration of language arts. She has taught elementary and high school language arts and undergraduate and graduate courses in reading and language arts at several universities. She has also participated in national projects as a consultant to the National Assessment of Educational Progress for the Education Commission of the States and as a consultant for the Educational Testing Service as a member of the Reading Specialist Committee. Most recently, she co-authored a set of integrated reading/writing performance tasks in English and Spanish for the Psychological Corporation and has just completed a new book on assessment and equity, *Assessment Alternatives for Diverse Classrooms*, for Christopher-Gordon Publishing in Boston. She is currently Director of the Region XI Comprehensive Assistance Center, WestEd Laboratory, San Francisco, Calif.

Dr. Daniel L. Duke

The Forum's Tuesday luncheon speaker was Dr. Daniel Duke, Professor and Director of the Thomas Jefferson Center for Educational Design, University of Virginia. In his presentation, "The Magic Kingdom of Professional Development," Dr. Duke compared the aspects of today's more popular professional development techniques to the Walt Disney World theme park. Among the similarities that he illustrated were the following:

- **It's OK to act like a child**—Successful professional development requires experimentation, continuous growth, and the willingness to have fun and go out on a limb.
- **It's a world of illusion**—Like Disney's "Fantasy Land" and "Tomorrow Land," professional development often involves perceptions in learning that may or may not be a reality. Each individual must discern among authentic growth and the illusion of change.
- **We're interested in changing the way we look at things**—Implementing a professional development plan results in new attitudes, new knowledge, and a heightened awareness of other educational possibilities.
- **People want to feel good**—Like Disney's multitude of games, rides, snacks, and other amusements, professional development is geared toward helping people feel better about themselves. However, it often leads individuals to frustration before growth occurs.

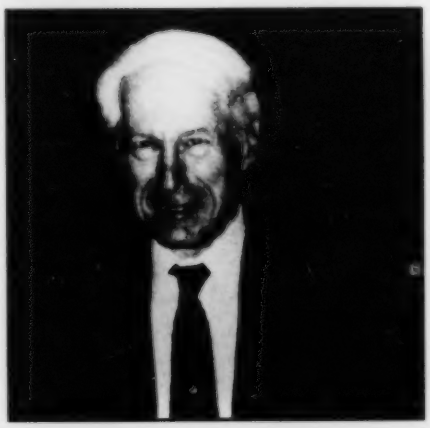
Dr. Duke emphasized the need for schools to replace parallel improvement systems for teachers with coordinated improvement systems. This involves the termination of performing checklist accountability tests for teachers of all levels and experiences. Today's teachers, Dr. Duke noted, have so many varying backgrounds in duration of employment, personal educational achievements, and individual accolades that the idea of using the same evaluation method for everyone is extremely ineffective. We must stop saying that all teachers must be judged in the same way, or that their classes must be taught in the same manner.

Dr. Duke pointed out that personal growth is stressful. As our choices in life increase, so does stress. But professional development is essential in sustaining our adequacy—and relevancy—in an ever-changing educational system. Dr. Duke emphasized that professional development often leads people in many directions that they never dreamed of going. One of Dr. Duke's close associates, for example, was interested in becoming computer literate so he could implement more high-tech teaching methods in his classroom. In his attempts to achieve that goal, he learned that to gain the necessary hardware and instructional tools, a grant proposal would have to be submitted for the provision of funds. As a result, the teacher not only became computer literate

and successfully taught his students using his new equipment and knowledge, but he also learned about the complete process of grant writing, an area of professional growth in which he never intended to venture.

Dr. Duke has served as a high school teacher, school administrator, director of staff development, researcher, department chair, and program development specialist. For the past two decades he has been a professor of education, serving on the faculties of Lewis and Clark College, Stanford University, and the University of Virginia. Dr. Duke designed five new programs in educational administration and assisted three states in the revision of certification requirements for school administrators. For the past twelve years, he has devoted himself to the study and improvement of teacher evaluation and professional development.

Dr. Harold Hodgkinson



The Wednesday afternoon luncheon speaker was Dr. Harold Hodgkinson, Director of the Center for Demographic Policy, Institute for Educational Leadership, Washington, D.C. In his dynamic presentation entitled "Toward a New South," Dr. Hodgkinson applied his years of experience as a demographer to address an array of social, political, religious, and other trends in the United States that affect the condition and the future of education in the Southeast. To illustrate his conclusions, he utilized a variety of charts, graphs, and U.S. maps that covered the following statistical categories:

- Rate of increase or decrease in federal, state, and local government expenditures
- Increase of U.S. birthrates (10 year average)
- Correlation of SAT scores and gross family income
- Distribution of family size and income by ethnic group
- Population mobility in the U.S.
- Ethnic group geographic distribution
- Religious and denominational geographic distribution
- Percentage of children living at or below the poverty level (by state)
- Average age U.S. population (and geographic distribution)
- Percent of Americans receiving welfare (and typical duration of benefits)
- Income and geographic distribution of college graduates by ethnic group
- Expenditures for higher education by state

Dr. Hodgkinson's visual presentation illustrated the growing demographic changes that are taking place in the United States today and how they increasingly affect every facet of our country, including the educational system.

Dr. Hodgkinson is also the Senior Advisor for the American Council on Education. He has directed major research projects for the Carnegie Commission, the U.S. Department of Education, the Exxon Foundation, and the Ford Foundation. Dr. Hodgkinson has consulted with over 600 colleges, universities, and school systems; federal, state, and city governments; and corporations. He has written twelve books, three of which have won national awards, and over 200 articles. Among his publications is *All One System: Demographics of Education, Kindergarten Through Graduate School.*

Community Involvement

For more information about Community Involvement sessions, contact Deloris Pringle, SERVE Senior Education Program Specialist, at 800-659-3204.

Families and Schools Together (FAST)

Presenter: Dr. Lynn McDonald, Founder and Director of Families and Schools Together (FAST), Madison, WI

In this session, participants received an overview of the effectiveness of Families and Schools Together (FAST), an innovative, proven program that involves parents in circles of support so they can more easily help their children succeed. FAST uses a research- and theory-based multi-family program to build active, positive social support networks for parents under stress. Participants learned how to engage parents in their children's learning by reviewing methods that teach parents how to be available to their children, how to provide feedback on how their children are behaving and progressing, and how to listen effectively to their children.

> FAST is a school-based, collaborative, family-focused program designed to increase the self-esteem and improve the school performance of at-risk elementary school children by supporting the natural strength of the family unit.

FAST was started in 1988 by Dr. Lynn McDonald and Family Service of Madison, Wis., a nonprofit mental health agency. It works with all families, but is most effective with the families of children ages 4-9 who exhibit multiple behavior problems in school. The program builds up protective factors against school failure, violence, delinquency, and substance abuse.

Whole families participate in eight weekly sessions of carefully orchestrated, fun, research-based activities. Following these sessions, they participate for two years in monthly family self-help support meetings called FAST-WORKS. Results after eight weeks show statistically significant improvements in classroom and home behaviors, self-esteem of the children, family closeness, parent involvement in school, and the reduction of social isolation. For example, students show a 20-25 percent increase in attention span and a similar decrease in conduct disorder. Follow-up studies show that as the changes are maintained over an extended period of time, FAST also leads to greater parent self-sufficiency and involvement in schools. FAST improves student behavior and supports family strength through a well-defined collaboration between parents, the school, a local mental health agency, and a local substance abuse provider.

Enthusiasm for FAST has been so great that local communities raised more than $7 million in the first two years of national replication to bring the program to individual schools. FAST has become a model program recognized as exemplary by numerous national honors and awards, including recognition by the U.S. Center for Substance Abuse Prevention, the Department of Health and Human Services, the U.S. Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, Harvard University with the Ford Foundation, United Way of America, and the Family Resource Coalition.

Community Development and Mobilization

Presenters: Deloris Pringle, Coordinator of Special Projects, SERVE, Inc.; Flora Devine, Vice President, Kennesau State College

In this interactive session, presenters provided a model for building community involvement and partnerships among various and diverse groups, organizations, and agencies in a community. The participants were engaged in a dynamic simulation which demonstrated the skills and expertise necessary for facilitating community consensus around education issues and solutions. The simulations were derived from the mobilization process and from the community itself.

Facilitating Continual Improvement

For more information about Facilitating Continual Improvement sessions, contact Betty Fry, SERVE Deputy Executive Director, at 800-352-6001.

Promoting Change in Mathematics and Science

Presenters: Four Program Specialists from the Eisenhower Mathematics and Science in Education Consortium at SERVE

Staff: Karen Charles, John Roberts, Lori Donoho, and Cheryl Cliett

In this interactive session, presenters offered a hands-on/minds-on science and math activity that modeled the instructional strategies necessary for improving teaching and learning in today's classrooms. The session was structured as a model lesson activity suggesting to participants that classroom activities should reflect the following format: engage, explore, explain, apply. The workshop itself modeled these four components by engaging participants in the study of pendular motion through a unique slide and audio show, allowing them to explore the relationships between variables common to pendulums, explaining the constructivist design of both the workshop and the lesson itself, and applying the features of the lesson to other areas of curriculum development.

Several key issues resurfaced throughout the session. One centered on how scientific knowledge is acquired and led to a discussion of the need to shift instructional strategies from passive to active. Another focused on traditional teaching and included lectures, reading, and note taking. Students engaged in similar activities will learn science, and, to demonstrate this belief, participants were given a task that required them to observe, manipulate, measure, and experiment. They remarked on their own enthusiasm and energy as they were actively engaged in a task that was designed to foster curiosity, encourage teamwork, and utilize problem-solving skills.

Through a detailed debriefing, participants focused on the key components in curriculum that are intended to foster continual improvement in student achievement in mathematics and science. The activities and instructional practices must be

- Standards-based (NCTM, National Science Standards, benchmarks)
- Student-focused (cognizant of learning styles research
- Active/Participatory (no couch potatoes)
- "Connected" (imbedded in real-world experiences)
- Constructivist (providing for the learner to make meaning of the experience)
- Concept-based (examining the whole as well as the parts)

Participants explored the issues presented in this session by describing what a classroom would look like if students were actively engaged in constructing their own learning. They left this session with tools designed to guide curriculum development efforts in their schools and districts and with a model of how to entice teachers with the "engage, explore, explain, apply" format.

The Learning Circle: A Partnership Approach

Presenters: Linton Deck, Managing Director, Center for the Enhancement of Educational Practice, Vanderbilt University; Panel from Jesse Wharton Elementary School, Greensboro, NC

Panelists: Pandora Bell,Principal; Maxine Carter, Resource Teacher; Patricia H. Deck, Director, The Learning Circle (TLC); Susan Douglas, 2nd Grade Teacher; Diane Henry, Kindergarten Teacher; Michael Joncas, 4th Grade Teacher; Edward Wilson, Custodian and Technology Contact Person

A total school team presented an oral case study describing "The Learning Circle: A Partnership Approach" which provided for the enhancement and improvement of learning in Jesse Wharton Elementary School (JWES), a North Carolina school with a diverse student body and staff. The partnership is composed of JWES (and community),

Imagine a school...

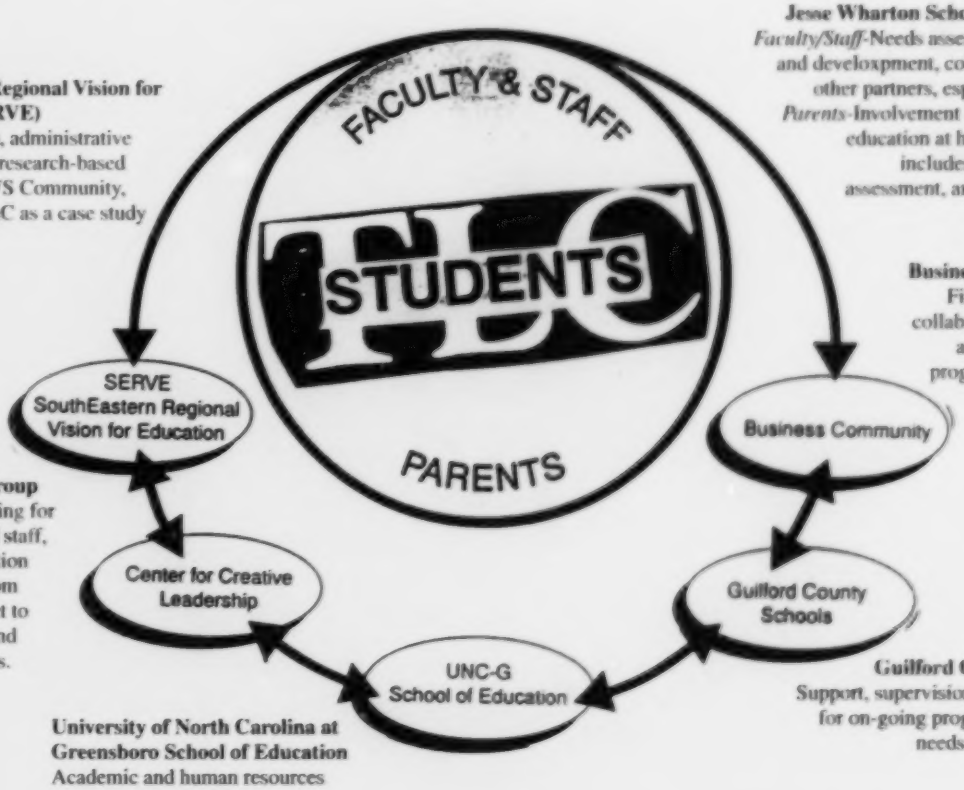
...in which every teacher is an inventor of work, every student a creator of knowledge, every classroom a learning laboratory. In this school, teachers design the laboratory, furnish it with materials, and guide the activities that engage students. Through this engagement—this work—students solve problems and create knowledge. They learn—and they learn how to learn.

The Learning Circle: A Partnership Approach

Each partner in The Learning Circle plays a critical role in the continuous improvement process that is always focused on the students. As the partners contribute, they learn and redefine their roles as a necessary member of the total interdependent community.

Jesse Wharton School Community
Faculty/Staff-Needs assessment, training and develoxpment, collaboration with other partners, especially parents. *Parents*-Involvement in students total education at home and school includes surveys, needs assessment, and participation.

SouthEastern Regional Vision for Education (SERVE)
Project direction, administrative support, current research-based programs for JWS Community, documenting TLC as a case study for others.



Business Community
Financial support, collaboration in needs assessments, and progress evaluation.

Center for Creative Leadership, Educational Applications Group
Leadership training for JWS faculty and staff, on-going evaluation and guidance from behavioral aspect to support parent and student programs.

Guilford County Schools
Support, supervision, and resources for on-going programs as well as needs unique to TLC.

University of North Carolina at Greensboro School of Education
Academic and human resources from the School of Education.

at Jesse Wharton Elementary School • 116 Pisgah Church Road • Greensboro, NC 27455

SERVE, the Center for Creative Leadership, University of North Carolina at Greensboro School of Education, Guilford County (N.C.) Schools, and the area business community.

The Learning Circle partners work together to develop an approach for continual improvement in student learning at Jesse Wharton Elementary School. The partnership provides resources for staff development and the involvement of parents in their children's learning at both the school and home. These efforts facilitate services to the students (who are the customers of the school) by inventing knowledge work for each student each day. Students are guided by educational leaders (school staff and parents) so that they may engage in knowledge work to solve problems, to create knowledge, and to learn how to learn. By doing this work, students are developing skills and understandings to enable them to function as effective citizens in an ever-changing, global, information-based society.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

The Learning Circle strives to achieve a true collaboration among its partners through the following acclamations and activities:

- Partners will work together to understand the culture and needs of the JWES community through surveys and feedback from the faculty, staff, students, and parents.
- The Center for Creative Leadership has developed and delivered new training models for JWES and will continue to learn from their experiences with this entire school staff.
- SERVE, in addition to providing the Project Director, will be learning new and better ways to facilitate school improvement through action research and case studies, as well as documentation of the change process in this school community.

Implementing Total Quality Management at the District, School and Classroom Level: What has Been Learned?

Presenters: **Betty Fry and Wendy McColskey, SERVE**
Panelists: Tom Williams, Executive Director, North Carolina Business Committee for Education; Chris Collins, Quality Facilitator, Quality Academy, Pinellas County Schools, FL; Maurice Pearsall, Director, Quality Education Center, Samford University, Birmingham, AL; Carol Lowe, Principal, Benjamin Russell High School, Alexander City, AL; Pat Washam, Director of Elementary Education, Lincoln County, NC; Sherri Hoyle, Teacher on Leave, Lincoln County, NC

In this session, participants talked with and heard from educators who are leaders in implementing Total Quality Management (TQM) at all levels of the education system (multi-district, district, school, classroom, business/community, etc.). The emphasis was on practical applications, impacts, and lessons learned at each level. The session included small group discussions and activities at the beginning and end of the panel's presentations.

Strategies for Successful Change

Presenter: **Shirley Hord, Senior Research Associate,** Southwest Educational Development Laboratory, Austin, TX

In this session, Dr. Hord focused with participants on six research-based strategies necessary to support and guide the process of educational change successfully. Leaders achieve change by creating a context for change, developing and articulating a vision, planning and providing resources, investing in training and professional development, accessing and monitoring progress, and providing continual assistance.

In addition, participants explored the concept and evolution of a *professional learning community* wherein a school staff works together in a highly collaborative way in order to increase outcomes for students. Professional learning communities were defined in terms of the following attributes: supportive and shared leadership, collective creativity, shared values and vision, supportive physical conditions and people capacities, and shared personal practice.

Literacy

For more information about Literacy sessions, contact Pat Deck, Director, The Learning Circle (TLC), at 910-545-9968.

Improving Literacy Within the Total School Community

Presenters: **Six Educators from Jesse Wharton Elementary School, Greensboro, NC**

Panelists: Pandora Bell, Principal; Maxine Carter, Resource Teacher; Patricia H. Deck, Director, The Learning Circle (TLC); Susan Douglas, 2nd Grade Teacher; Diane Henry, Kindergarten Teacher; Michael Joncas, 4th Grade Teacher

How do you design a program to meet the literacy needs of your students? In this session, presenters and panelists detailed the process one school used to make literacy for all students a top priority. Participants learned about specific techniques for engaging faculty and staff, students, and parents in meaningful literacy activities for continual student learning.

Presenters focused on two recent articles, "The Best of Both Worlds" by Karen Diegmueller and "Assessment in a Literature-Based Classroom" by Linda J. Fenner, from selected educational publications. Both featured a variety of empirical research studies, literacy resource lists, and specific examples of classroom literacy improvement techniques. In "The Best of Both Worlds" Karen Diegmueller suggests that a balanced approach—a combination of basic-skills and whole-language instruction—works best when it comes to teaching beginning readers. She emphasized the "Basic-Skills Classroom" teaching philosophy which builds on a series of basic concepts that introduces emergent readers to such fundamental skills as holding a book right side up, learning their ABCs, linking sounds and letters, combining sounds, and recognizing words with similar letter-sound patterns. In "Assessment in a Literature-Based Classroom," Linda J. Fenner asserts that the most important work in education, particularly for those who are interested in educational reform, is taking place not in discussions of policy or curriculum, but with children in classrooms. She addresses such critical literacy measurement issues as *reliability* (making consistent judgments about literacy) and *validity* (focusing assessment on the processes and behaviors critical to literacy development).

The New Three R's in Reading and Writing Research Redesign and Rubrics

Presenter: **Elizabeth Anne Neal, Federal Program Director, Elizabeth City-Pasquotank Public Schools, NC**

In this session, Elizabeth Anne Neal, Federal Program Director, Elizabeth City-Pasquotank Public Schools, N.C., critically examined how her school system improved student achievement in the area of communication skills for grades 1-6 and addressed the common dilemma of students that are not progressing in reading and writing (and teachers who do not know how to help them). Educators researched and redesigned their communication skills program to reflect the research while involving schools in staff development that centered on the redesigned components. They have now institutionalized the program with the use of an instructional policy and teacher self-assessment. Both provide a framework for schools and teachers to use as they self-assess their implementation of the components in this research-based communication skills program.

In the presentation, participants learned about the components of the Elizabeth City-Pasquotank Public Schools grades 1-6 Communication Skills Program:

- **Teacher reads aloud**—The teacher reads a variety of quality literature to the class daily to model reading strategies and motivate students to read.
- **Self-selected reading block with teacher/student conferences**—Daily periods are provided for students to practice reading independently from materials they have selected.
- **Teacher directed reading block**—Daily periods for direct instruction on comprehension and metacognative strategies are scheduled, using a variety of quality literature and materials.
- **Spelling/Phonics block**—The teacher utilizes a three component system where students focus on words frequently used in writing, manipulative phonics, and handwriting formation.
- **Writing block**—Daily periods for direct instruction within the framework of the writing process should occur.
- **Take-home reading**—All students are assigned recreational reading on their independent reading level each night as a homework assignment.

Participants covered a wide variety of topics in the session, including skill-based vs. literature-based reading instruction, components of Best Practice (New Standards for Teaching and Learning in America's Schools) in Teaching Writing, assumptions based on current research and practice, and the "one book/whole class" teaching method.

How to Improve Students' Writing

Presenters: Enrique Puig, Instructional Support Teacher, Title I Program, Orange County Schools, Orlando, FL

This session was planned to enhance participants' awareness of what an effective classroom looks like when the goal is to develop literacy skills for all students. Interactive session activities helped participants understand the kinds of experiences teachers must plan and conduct to encourage students to read and write. Presenter Enrique Puig, Instructional Support Teacher, Title I Program, Orange County Schools, Orlando, Fla., emphasized the need for a well-balanced writing program and outlined the following types of writing to be used collaboratively:

- **Modeling**—Writing aloud, a powerful modeling technique, occurs when the teacher writes in front of students and verbalizes what he/she is thinking and writing. As children observe, the teacher explains what he/she is doing (format, layout, spacing, handwriting, spelling, punctuation, vocabulary, etc.). Writing on large chart paper, the overhead projector, or the chalkboard, the teacher verbalizes his/her mental processes as well as the actual transcriptions, and then the students relate the spoken word to the written word.
- **Shared/Interactive**—The students compose along with the teacher. Shared writing ventures beyond language experience in which the teacher takes dictation from the child's language. The writing is negotiated with meaning, choices of words, and topics discussed and is decided jointly by both the students and the teacher. The teacher must take an enabling, supportive role that encourages and invites students to participate and enjoy writing experiences that they might not be able to do on their own. Since the teacher doesn't expect students to create texts on their own, the children are focused on the composing-thinking process. Therefore, shared writing helps to free their imagination.
- **Guided**—The teacher's role in guided writing is to guide students, respond to their needs, and extend their thinking in the process of composing texts. As in guided reading, where the student holds the book and does the reading, in guided writing the student holds the pen and does the writing. The teacher's role is simply to help students discover what they want to say and how to say it meaningfully, with clarity, coherence, interest, style, form, and individual voice. Teachers are supportive rather than directive, suggestive rather than prescriptive.
- **Independent**—In independent writing, the student has many opportunities to write without teacher intervention or evaluation. The student takes the responsibility for working out challenges involved in the writing process. The purpose of independent writing is to build fluency, establish writing habits, make personal connections, explore meanings, promote critical thinking, and use writing as an enjoyable, self-chosen activity.

Monitoring Progress and Evaluation Issues

For more information about Monitoring Progress and Evaluation Issues sessions, contact Wendy McColskey, SERVE Research Director, at 800-755-3277.

Focus Groups: Guided Discussion with a Purpose

Presenters: Susan Crawford and Helen DeCasper, Evaluation Unit, SERVE

In this session, presenters led participants through the step-by-step process of conducting a focus group, which is defined as a prompted discussion that provides a method of data-collection in which ten to twelve participants gather together to discuss issues with which they are familiar. Focus groups are powerful information-gathering techniques that are useful throughout the program development, implementation, and revision process. They provide qualitative evaluation data that enable decision makers to understand the impact of a program on target populations and identify the barriers to program implementation. This session was designed to provide instruction for how and when to use focus groups in educational settings.

Strengthening the School Improvement Process Through Monitoring and Evaluation

Presenters: Helen DeCasper and Susan Crawford, Evaluation Unit, SERVE

Presenters in this session provided participants with hands-on evaluation techniques that offer key information at critical stages of program development and implementation. Participants learned how to use program evaluation to strengthen the school improvement process, including first needs assessment and design and implementation of the program. The session covered establishing individual and program outcomes, gathering and analyzing data, determining program impact, and reporting the results. Participants designed evaluation sections of grant proposals and learned about the critical role evaluation plays in program improvement.

Conducting Schoolwide Action Research: Its Purpose, Promise, and Problems—Reports from the Field

Presenters: Frances Hensley, Co-Director, Program for School Improvement, University of Georgia; Robin Gay, Principal, Scott Elementary, Thomasville, GA

Presenters in this session discussed their experiences with schoolwide action research. Frances Hensley from the Georgia Program for School Improvement described reasons why schools conduct action research. Robin Gay, Principal, Scott Elementary, Thomasville, Ga., described the kinds of schoolwide research her school improvement team has conducted and the impact it has had on the school.

Handouts included a diagram on the use of teams at the school, the school improvement goals and objectives, and tools for continual improvement used in the improvement process. These included process flow charts, cause-and-effect diagrams, histograms, Pareto charts, scatter diagrams, control charts, and plan-do-study-act cycles.

Presenters listed five questions to ask/answer in assessing schoolwide initiatives:

1. What data do you have that relates to your instructional improvement initiative?
2. How can you organize these data?
3. What do they tell you?
4. What are you going to do with this information?
5. What new data do you want to collect to inform your decision making?

Using Accountability to Change the Culture of Schools: How to Get People Committed to Producing Quality

Facilitator: Wendy McColskey, Research Director, SERVE

Presenters: Mack McCary, Assistant Superintendent, Elizabeth City-Pasquotank Schools, NC; Debra Hamm, Chief Academic Officer, Richland II School District, SC

This session was geared for those interested in strategizing about a vision for district or school accountability that goes beyond "just test scores." One presentation highlighted nine problems with accountability as currently practiced. Dr. Hamm suggested that accountability should not revolve around testing, but on knowing results and why they occurred. She suggested that high stakes accountability encourages compliance, but not quality. In the second presentation, the presenter told his district's story of accountability as a lever for changing the culture of schools. Participants received a draft copy a SERVE R&D document, *Using Accountability as a Lever for Changing the Culture of Schools*, which highlights the accountability strategies of the Elizabeth City-Pasquotank, N.C., Schools.

Parent Involvement and Early Childhood

For more information about Parent Involvement and Early Childhood sessions, contact Nancy Livesay, SERVEing Young Children Coordinator, at 800-352-6001.

Stand Up for Parent Involvement

Presenters: Susan Walton, Parent Involvement Coordinator, Office of Business and Education Alliances, Florida Department of Education and Anne Thompson, President, Florida Congress of Parents and Teachers, Inc. (PTA)

Individuals who are engaged in promoting parent involvement at the local, state, and regional levels presented their views of the role and potential impact of parent involvement. Participants were offered ideas for increasing involvement and creating a more welcoming and collaborative atmosphere at school. Presenters noted that family-centered services

- Honor the racial, ethnic, cultural, and socioeconomic diversity of families
- Recognize family strengths and respect different methods of coping
- Promote the sharing of complete and unbiased information with parents on a continuing basis and in a supportive manner
- Recognize that the family is the constant in a child's life, while the service systems and personnel within those systems fluctuate
- Facilitate parent/professional collaboration at all levels of service provision: services for an individual child; program development, implementation, and evaluation; and policy formation
- Encourage and facilitate family-to-family support and networking
- Help participants understand and incorporate the developmental needs of infants, children, and adolescents and their families into service delivery systems
- Implement comprehensive policies and programs that provide emotional and financial support to meet the needs of families
- Design accessible service delivery systems that are flexible, culturally competent, and responsive to family-identified needs

Key Elements of Family-Centered Services

- Honoring the racial, ethnic, cultural, and socioeconomic diversity of families
- Recognizing family strengths and individuality and respecting different methods of coping
- Sharing with parents, on a continuing basis and in a supportive manner, complete and unbiased information
- Recognizing that the family is the constant in a child's life, while the service systems and personnel within those systems fluctuate
- Facilitating parent/professional collaboration at all levels of service provision: services for an individual child; program development, implementation, and evaluation; and policy formation
- Encouraging and facilitating family-to-family support and networking
- Understanding and incorporating the developmental needs of infants, children, and adolescents and their families into service delivery systems
- Implementing comprehensive policies and programs that provide emotional and financial support to meet the needs of families
- Designing accessible service delivery systems that are flexible, culturally competent, and responsive to family-identified needs

Stand Up for Parent Involvement Participant's Materials

Sharing Successful Practices in Early Childhood Education

Presenters: Cathy Grace, Director, Family Resource Center, Tupelo, MS, and Rhonda Corley, Director of Early Childhood and Academic Assistance, Greenville, SC

A critical need in early childhood is to help children and their families find and access the services they need to improve their situations. This presentation highlighted two programs that have been successful in reaching children and their families within the community and providing them with the necessary services. Discussion focused on adapting services to meet community needs, pooling resources, and developing partnerships among schools, businesses, and other community agencies.

In this session, participants learned about the Family Learning TEAM (Together Everyone Achieves More) of the School District of Greenville County, S.C. This program is geared toward developing partnerships, programs, and practices that will empower families to become successful learners. The program is comprised of

(1) home visits to parents of newborns through four-year-olds, (2) parent workshops in which parents enjoy preschool interaction times, share quality stories, hear guest speakers, or learn about parenting, (3) the Comprehensive Family Literacy Program, where parents work on receiving their GED and their preschoolers develop readiness skills, (4) *Family Learning Times*, the TEAM monthly newsletter, and (5) special workshops and seminars for parents in PTA groups and community settings.

Participants also received information about the Family Resource Center located in Tupelo, Miss. The Resource Center opened its doors in May 1994 through the efforts of Lee County Schools, Lift Head Start, the CREATE Foundation (a private community foundation), and Tupelo Public Schools. As a result of additional funding from the Mississippi Department of Human Services, services such as respite care and after-school tutorial programs have been added. Services offered through the resources center include a lending library containing books, videotapes, and other resource materials; weekly parenting classes; and employee workshops and seminars designed to help employees learn to balance work and home responsibilities. Since opening its doors, the Family Resource Center has served more than 200 families and over 325 children.

The Family Learning Team's Mission:
To develop partnerships, programs, and practices which will empower families for success with learning and school.

Our Total Program

- Serves 1,100 families with home visits by 4-K teachers
- Provides a monthly preschool newsletter to 10,000 families
- Distributes 5,000-6,000 free books to families each year
- Holds monthly parent meetings in 41 schools, 3 high schools, and 10 local agencies
- Offers a voluntary parenting program to any preschool family in the district
- Incorporates parents as participatory learners
- Works closely with Greenville agencies to provide parents with services they need
- Serves families with 80 % having single parent head of house

The Family Learning Team
206 Wilkins Street • Greenville, SC 29605
864-241-3508 • (FAX) 864-241-3548

The School District of Greenville County

Continuity in Early Childhood: A Framework for Home, School and Community Linkages

Presenters: **Nancy Livesay, Program Manager, SERVEing Young Children; Diane Michael, CSPD Coordinator, Office of Maternal and Child Health, Early Intervention Program, Charleston, WV; and Carol Perroncel, Early Childhood Specialist, Appalachian Education Laboratory (AEL), Charleston, WV**

The *Continuity Framework* is a tool designed to help families, schools, community agencies, and interested professionals effectively work together around issues of continuity and transition. During this training session, participants focused on the use of the *Continuity Framework* as a mechanism for developing home, school, and community pa tnerships. Participants were offered ideas about who to include in the partnership, potential uses of the Framework, and application of the Framework to their own community collaboratives.

Planning for School Improvement

Presenters: **School improvement leaders Lisa Hodge, Coffee County, GA, and Kathy Taylor, Brooks County, GA**

In this session, presenters outlined the process used by SERVE to assist schools in the development of school improvement plans. This process is appropriate for districts or schools engaged in systemic school improvement efforts or those planning for schoolwide Title I implementation. School improvement teams from south Georgia, who participated in this process with SERVE, talked about their experiences, presented the plans they developed, and discussed implementation of those plans.

Professional Development

For more information about Professional Development sessions, contact Deborah Childs-Bowen, Director, Urban Education & Georgia Teacher Center, at 800-659-3204.

A Hands-Joined Approach to Conflict Resolution

Presenters: Sharon Farmer, Guidance Counselor, DA Smith Middle School, Ozark, AL; Howard Harrison, Teacher, Eastgate Middle School, Ozark, AL; Rebecca Rhoden Ogletree, Education Specialist, SERVE; Deborah Childs-Bowen, Director, Field Services and Professional Development, SERVE

This informative professional development session highlighted a collaborative district-wide approach to conflict resolution for all grade levels and school community members. Participants engaged in the resolution strategies and reflected on the resources available to assist in improving school climate and student learning.

The focus of the session concentrated primarily on various methods used to effectively combat classroom tensions. Participants engaged in discussions around the origins and anatomy of conflict among students. Demonstrations of effective strategies were provided. Participants were given a series of handouts that illustrated these conflict resolution techniques. One handout, for example, pointed out that there are variations in anger management techniques among individuals. According to presenters, there is generally a matter of seconds after a conflict is initiated that an individual's psychological responses take over. Strategies were presented to reduce the psychological response and to increase the cognitive capacities. It was stressed that when students gain this control over their anger, they can then make constructive choices of their responses such as

- Share
- Compromise
- Say "I'm sorry"
- Agree to disagree
- Agree to share and take turns
- Take responsibility and fix it
- Listen, paraphrase, and reflect
- Ask for help or offer help
- Ignore it and walk away
- Talk it out and problem-solve

Throughout the session, these conflict resolution techniques were discussed in detail, and participants arrived at practical solutions for everyday classroom problems. In addition, the subject of tension and anger from the student viewpoint was covered. Participants discussed some of the typical concerns of children in today's classrooms and debated what kind of student response would be most appropriate for each individual situation. This method offered participants a unique opportunity to approach conflict resolution from multiple perspectives and take this information back with them to their schools.

> "People don't get along
> because they fear each other.
> People fear each other
> because they don't know each other.
> They don't know each other because they
> have not properly communicated with
> each other."
>
> Martin Luther King, Jr.

Teachers as Leaders: From the Community to the Classroom

Presenters: Representatives from Teachers as Leaders, Gwinnett County, GA

Panelists: Pat Mitchell, Executive Director, Teachers as Leaders; Yvonne Frey, Teacher and Co-Chairperson of the Teachers as Leaders Board of Trustees; Roberta Heron, Teacher and Chairman of the Teachers as Leaders Alumni Association

Representatives highlighted Teachers as Leaders (TAL), a leadership development program for educators (especially for classroom teachers who desire to remain in the classroom). TAL provides a series of learning opportunities designed to broaden the educator's appreciation for the community and the community's appreciation for the needs within the classroom. Through interaction with the business community, governmental community, and peers, networking possibilities are made available which further empower teachers to develop their individual pursuit of excellence.

Initiated six years ago, the TAL program is a non-profit corporation funded primarily though local business, alumni, Board of Trustees, program participants, and foundations. The program expenses average $1,000 to $1,500 per participant for a class of 30 to 40 educators. TAL participants receive five (5) staff development units and a professional development stipend.

The mission of TAL is to promote leadership development for educators and, in collaboration with community partners, to

- Raise the status of, and appreciation for, the role of teachers
- Increase professionalism, pride, vision, and confidence for teachers
- Create networking opportunities which will empower teachers
- Develop and affirm the concept of the teacher as a leader
- Provide a series of learning opportunities to broaden the participant's appreciation for the community, the resources available within the community, and the commitment needed in their individual pursuit of excellence

Teachers Teach the World

"The leaders of tomorrow are sitting in today's classrooms. Leadership development of our educators so that they can be the role models for tomorrow's leaders is what TAL, Inc., is all about."

Pat Mitchell
Executive Diredtor
TAL, Inc.

The TAL program is structured similarly to various Chamber of Commerce leadership programs. A "class" of 35 to 40 educators is nominated and selected to participate in a year-long learning opportunity. A fall retreat, three day-long seminars, study groups, and a culminating spring retreat enable educators to explore many aspects of their community and their own individual leadership styles. The program is directed by a Board of Trustees whose membership includes the business community, the school system, and the alumni of TAL.

Presenters: Mickey Hickman, Assistant Principal, Pulaski County High School, Pulaski County, VA (QUILT trainer and former history teacher)

In this session, presenters discussed the content and structure of Questioning and Understanding to Improve Learning and Thinking (QUILT), a nationally-validated staff development program (K-12). Participants learned about research on effective classroom questioning and the QUILT program in order to make a decision regarding the appropriateness of this program for their school or district.

QUILT's yearlong process of collegial learning results in increased teacher use of effective questioning techniques and higher levels of student thinking. QUILT provides a basis for classroom and schoolwide restructuring as it strengthens collaborative working patterns within the school. The QUILT staff development program has the following four components:

- **Introduction Training**—Participants learn about effective questioning techniques during a three-day (18 hour) introductory training period. The training includes a presentation of knowledge and theory, demonstration of behavior and skills, and many opportunities to apply and practice good questioning techniques.
- **Collegiums**—Participants meet in periodic forums to learn, share, and interact about particular questioning behaviors targeted for practice and improvement.
- **Partnering**—Teams of peers participate in ongoing, mutual support activities based in their own schools.
- **Individual Study and Analysis**—During their involvement in the program, participants read independently, practice their skills, and gather data between collegiums.

Using a variety of materials, the makers of traditional quilts pieced together patterns of great beauty to form useful objects for their families. Similarly, teachers, using content and good questions, can help students piece together information and ideas to form the concepts needed to understand their world. The QUILT model, the basic content for the program, views questioning as a complex, dynamic process that is governed by teacher behavior at critical junctures.

Quilt Quotations

•Questioning provides you with a mirror for your teaching

•Be a guide on the side and not a sage on the stage

•As for me all I know is that I know nothing. –Socrates

•Teachers rarely ask effective questions by chance

•Student learning is always preceded by student questions

•Classroom diversity helps expand answers.

•A wise question is half of knowledge.–Lord Bacon

•Discussion gives the student the opportunity to think out loud

•Where all think alike, no one thinks very much. –W. Lippman

•A professor keeps answering questions that nobody asked. –W. Lippman

•The acquiring or inquiring mind? We have a choice. –W. Lippman

•Give a student a question to answer, and she will learn the passage she has just read. Teach her how to ask questions, and she will learn how to learn for the rest of her life. –J.R. Gavelek / T.E. Raphael

•One of the simplest ways to permit student questions is to stop asking questions yourself. –J.T. Dillon

•We are often searching for better answers when we should be developing better questions. –Lord Bacon

•An atmosphere conducive to effective student questioning is one in which persons respect the ideas and concerns of all. –F. Hunkins

•Watch for the question behind the question. The child is trying to organize his world. –Lord Bacon

•In a classroom atmosphere conducive to good questions and questioning, students realize a shared responsibility for their learning. –F. Hunkins

Professional Development: A Key Ingredient in School Renewal

Presenters: **Sandra Levent, Principal, Lilburn Elementary School, Lilburn, GA; Iris Mathis, Teacher and Head of Staff Development, Hahira Elementary School, Lowndes County, GA; Peggy Pepper, Principal, Eastvalley Elementary School, Cobb County, GA; Frances Hensley, Co-Director, League of Professional Schools, University of Georgia**

Presenters in this session shared their individual school's unique approach to school renewal and the integral role professional development plays in this effort. All of the presenters represented schools that are members of the League of Professional Schools, a network of Georgia schools involved in educational renewal. Lilburn Elementary is a Georgia Pay-For-Performance (PFP) School, Eastvalley is a Charter School, and Hahira is a School for the Future.

The Program for School Improvement (PSI) at the University of Georgia focuses on the individual school as the center of improvement. PSI is dedicated to improving public education through promoting the school as a professional, democratic workplace—a place where shared governance and action research are used to plan and implement instructional improvement activities. PSI assists schools to create democratic learning communities through its League of Professional Schools. The League works with schools to break down the barriers to communication within and among schools. From quarterly meetings to the distribution of newsletters, the League puts schools in touch with each other and provides its members with a forum for them to learn collectively.

In 1992, the Georgia State Board of Education was directed to develop a "Pay For Performance" program to reward exemplary performance at the school level, and shortly after, Lilburn Elementary School in Gwinnett County became a PFP school. PFP is designed as an improvement incentive for any school whose faculty believes that

- The school is performing in an exemplary manner,
- The staff can persuasively demonstrate their exemplary performance by identifying and meeting a comprehensive set of performance objectives which reflect the results of the school's educational program.

As part of the "Georgia 2000" initiative, PFP schools are working toward two overarching goals: (1) that every adult American will be literate and will posses the knowledge and skills necessary to compete in the global economy, and (2) that every school will promote partnerships that will increase parental involvement and participation in promoting the social, emotional, and academic growth of children. Woven throughout each of the presentations was the theme of professional development becoming a pivotal point for all their school change efforts.

Leadership Through Collaboration

Presenters: **Rita G. Paul, Program Coordinator, South Carolina Department of Health and Human Services; Rebecca Rhoden Ogletree, Education Specialist, SERVE; Deborah Childs-Bowen, Director, Field Services and Professional Development, SERVE**

In this session, presenters and participants engaged in interactive professional development activities that assist in the creation of collaborative communities and schools. The tools and strategies that were discussed are quite adaptable for any constituencies, including parents, teachers, and agencies.

Presenters provided a statewide model of how this training has been utilized in the State of South Carolina's Primary Prevention Plan, a statewide prevention strategy designed to substantially reduce the incidence and number of health and social problems by working with people, communities, and systems to prevent the onset of disease, disability, or high-risk social behaviors. The Plan identified problems, risk factors, protective factors, goals, and strategies; listed the state agencies responsible for carrying out the strategies; and identified other private and public organizations and agencies that are key players in prevention efforts. The six priority target areas listed in the Plan represented escalating problems for which the existing system had not met the current need. The priority areas selected for this first Plan were Early School Readiness; teenage pregnancy prevention/avoidance of early sexual activity; alcohol, tobacco, and other drug abuse among youth; adolescent violence; family planning; and independent community-based living for older adults.

Each member of the Primary Prevention Task Force and its local collaborative team leaders received training in Leadership for Collaboration. These skills have been utilized for the past two years to reach the local goals of strengthening families, environmental health, and employment and economic development with diverse groups of individuals and agencies collaborating to do so.

In essence, the purpose of the Leadership for Collaboration training and the purpose of the Primary Prevention Institute has been to assist communities in planning for their future. Important decisions must be made at the local level if effective prevention efforts are to be shaped and implemented. The cost/benefit ratio will be favorable only if prevention efforts work, thereby preventing even larger expenditures on the treatment of disease and other health and social problems. Collaborative partnerships at the local level among agencies, organizations, and concerned citizens are essential for success in this changing environment.

High Expectations For All: Standards for Staff Development

Presenters: Stephanie Hirsh, Associate Executive Director, National Staff Development Council

Presenters in this session compared traditional staff development to the more effective model emerging from the newly-developed standards of the National Staff Development Council (NSDC). Participants reviewed, reflected upon, and discussed these standards as a means of moving from the "sit and get" staff development paradigm (where participants are expected to learn about the latest ideas on teaching from the "experts") to one which focuses on individual and site-based needs, provides sufficient time and follow-up support for content and skill mastery, and incorporates growth-promoting strategies such as study groups, action research, and peer coaching.

The NSDC, a non-profit professional association of approximately 8,000 educators, is deeply committed to ensuring success for all students through the application of high standards of professional development for everyone involved in student learning. The Council believes that high quality staff development programs are essential to creating schools in which all students and staff members are learners who continually improve their performance.

The standards of the NSDC are organized in three categories: context, process, and content.

- **Context** addresses the organization, system, or culture in which the new information, or learnings, will be implemented. Some contexts are more supportive toward improvement than others.
- **Process** refers to the "how" of staff development; it describes the means for the acquisition of new knowledge and skills. Examples of process standards include group development, follow-up and support, and evaluation.
- **Content** refers to the skills and knowledge that effective middle level educators need to possess or acquire through staff development. Examples of content include research-based instructional strategies, adolescent development, high expectations, and curriculum.

Context, process, and content standards must all be in place to ensure that staff development makes a difference in student learning. For example, strong research-based content with no attention to follow-up (process) or leadership support (context) will not result in improved student learning. NSDC now recognizes that everyone involved in student learning—the board of education, central office administrators, principals and teachers, classified/support staff and parents, etc.—must continually improve their knowledge and skills in order to ensure student learning. Likewise, NSDC understands that staff development is not the exclusive responsibility of someone given the title of "staff developer." Rather, it is the responsibility of superintendents, central office administrators, principals, and teachers, among others.

Charting a New Course in Professional Development and Teacher Leadership

Presenters: Anne Jolly, Special Services Teacher, Alabama D.O.E.; Mary Dean Barringer, Vice President, National Board for Professional Teaching Standards; Gwendolyn Williams, Director, Peachtree Urban Writing Project, Georgia State University; Sue Cain, Coordinator, Mathematics & Vocational Education, Rockdale County Schools, Conyers, GA

In this session, a panel of teacher leaders shared ideas, experiences, and information on new approaches in cutting-edge professional development. Participants were encouraged to share their thoughts, perceptions, and aspirations concerning the increasing role that classroom teachers are taking in designing and implementing these events. Participants discussed the following small group topics:

- What types of professional development do you need?
- Describe an experience that has helped you grow professionally.
- There are well-documented institutional barriers to quality professional development such as time, administrative support, resources, etc. What are some other barriers encountered and how might we move past them?

Presenters also focused some guiding questions as they related to their personal and professional growth experiences. Among the presenters was a representative from the

Alabama State Teacher Forum (ASTF), an organization created in 1994 by a group of exemplary teachers to support our belief that for meaningful education change to occur in Alabama, classroom teachers must be involved as partners. ASTF is a proactive, non-partisan, voluntary organization of practicing teachers composed of a Leadership Council of ten exemplary teachers, including six Alabama State Teachers of the Year and 90 teacher organizers statewide. Through those key organizers, the ASTF seeks to network with classroom teachers throughout the state. Currently, the ASTF has approximately 1,500 teachers in its database.

During the past two years, ASTF has designed and implemented a series of events to network with Alabama teachers, involve them in education reform, increase leadership skills in Alabama's teachers, and challenge them to change the educational system. Currently, ASTF emphasizes the establishment of local teacher forums that can provide opportunities for classroom teachers to share their expertise, insight, and knowledge with each other and with those who set educational policy. Regardless of what happens at other levels of education and government, Alabama's educational system will improve *one classroom at a time*.

School Organization and Climate

For more information about School Organization and Climate sessions, contact Charles Ahearn, SERVE Director of Publications, at 800-352-6001.

Measuring School Climate: Experiencing the Process

Presenters: **Ronny Green, President, Interactive Learning Systems, Monticello, FL; David Collins, Director of Strategic Planning and Continuous Quality Improvement, Orange County Schools, Orlando, FL**

In this session, presenters reviewed a variety of school climate circumstances and discussed ways to improve each individual situation. Participants engaged in the data collection and analysis process to gain first-hand experience with a valid instrument and the analysis of the reports generated by that instrument.

Using the *Restructuring Schools Survey Instrument* by Assessment Technology, Inc., participants analyzed a series of common problems in today's schools, including the issues of poor management, employee morale, distribution of resources, and training and support. Then, working in small groups, they made collective decisions concerning the best way to solve each problem. The following example illustrates the frequent concern over frustrating school leadership:

> Schools Must Evolve
> ***From:*** School leadership characterized by authoritarian decision-makers with an "I'm the boss around here" attitude
> ***To:*** School Leadership characterized as using coaching counseling skills to achieve a "We're all in this together" attitude
>
> Where School Leadership:
> - **Models** day-to-day coaching skills and becomes a "cheerleader"
> - **Rejects** "I'm in control" behavior on the part of any employee
> - **Counsels** individual school family members (employees) and provides direction and encouragement
> - **Promotes** the use of authority and shares available resources
> - **Focuses** on interpersonal skills as a powerful administrative tool
> - **Demands** high quality work from everyone

In addition, presenters reviewed the Restructuring School Review (RSR), an effective process for managing restructuring efforts that uses Information-Age technology specifically designed to meet the needs of schools and districts wishing to implement restructuring activities. The technology utilized focuses on the use of computers and the Restructuring Schools Survey Instrument (RSSI) which is used to survey faculty perceptions as related to the presence of conditions and leadership behaviors necessary to support meaningful school restructuring.

Safe Schools

Presenter: **Bob Nations, Director of the Southeastern Regional Safe Schools Institute, SERVE, Inc.**

Participants in this session reviewed the issues of school violence and school safety and learned about the legal rights of students and faculty, safety and security methodologies, and cost and labor efficiency in dealing with school safety issues. Presenter Bob Nations outlined details of the Southeastern Regional Safe Schools Institute (SeRSSI) which assists schools and communities in developing strategies and plans for reducing disruptive behavior, crime, and violence on school properties and within the community at large. SeRSSI provides comprehensive crisis management planning and short-term interventions in addition to working with community members in developing a coordinated systems approach.

This systems approach includes parents, schools, law enforcement, emergency medical and mental health professionals, clergy, civic leaders, court personnel, and students in preparing the community in prevention, intervention, and postvention strategies as a network of response. The Safe Schools Institute responds to schools and communities by identifying their needs related to improved school safety and implementing tailored solutions.

District Support for Improving School Climate

Presenters: **Ronny Green, President, Interactive Learning Systems, Monticello, FL; David Collins, Director of Strategic Planning and Continuous Quality Improvement, Orange County Schools, Orlando, FL**

In this activity-oriented session, participants analyzed research findings concerning the conditions necessary for improving school climate and gained a clear picture of the roles played by district personnel in effectively working to assist schools in improving their climate. Presenters focused on two informational resources, *School Improvement Site Study* and *A Study of Best Practices for Effective School Renewal & Improvement.*

School Improvement Site Study is a report compiled by the Goals 2000 Consortium of Northeast Florida, a collaborative school improvement project designed to assist the participating pilot schools in refocusing their school improvement planning process to target the outcomes of Florida's Blueprint 2000. The report outlined the various steps involved in conducting a school improvement site study, a process that provides data about a selected school. Each site study consists of a two-day visit to the schools by an on-site review team in which one-on-one interviews with teachers, support staff, students, and parents are conducted. In addition, the review team administers survey instruments to the total faculty/staff during a schoolwide meeting each afternoon of the visit. The team then returns to the school several weeks later to present and analyze the site study results to the total faculty. Areas in need of development are recognized, and steps are outlined to correct problems and concerns.

A Study of Best Practices for Effective School Renewal & Improvement by the Quality School Assessment Instrument detailed the efforts that a number of educational organizations, including the Educational Services Consortium, Inc. (ESC), took in identifying ways that schools and districts can better utilize their human and other resources in an effective manner. The purpose of the study was to provide individuals in key leadership positions with the tools, or "Best Practices," available to address the issue of school renewal and improvement.

Improving School Climate: One District's Story

Presenters: **Ronny Green, President, Interactive Learning Systems, Monticello, FL; David Collins, Director of Strategic Planning and Continuous Quality Improvement, Orange County Schools, Orlando, FL**

Presenters in this session highlighted a large Florida School District's (Orange County) efforts to improve student performance at its "high needs" schools through the improvement of school climate. Participants learned what worked and what did not and were invited to offer suggestions for continuing efforts to improve school climate.

Participants also examined the following "Six Strategies for School Leaders to Make Change Successful":

1. **Creating a Context for Change**—building positive relationships; shaping the school's norms so that change is accepted enthusiastically; eliminating barriers

to change; developing community, communication, and consensus on a vision for the school. Examples include selecting staff who can share, express, and reinforce the values of the leaders in order to help build the desired culture; facing conflict, being willing to deal with disputes, and through conflict, build unity; using routines and concrete actions to demonstrate values and beliefs; telling stories to illustrate what they value in school; and nurturing the traditions and rituals to express, define, and reinforce the school culture.

2. **Developing and Communicating the Vision**—identifying an "ideal future picture" of the school and helping everyone see how they can make that picture a reality. Examples include talking about the vision so that others understand and believe that the vision reflects their own interests, encouraging participation in developing the vision, helping people develop images of "how to get there" so that action is directly tied to the vision, and demonstrating visible commitment to the vision.
3. **Planning and Providing Resources**—thinking through what needs to happen to bring about change and putting it down on paper. Examples include making sure there is a plan, but that it is evolving, not "written in stone"; making sure teachers have what they need to try new ideas; and making sure that the right resources are available and that they include time and people in addition to materials and equipment (effective leaders are adept at finding additional funds and sources of materials and supplies).
4. **Investing in Professional Development**—recognizing that time spent on high quality training will pay off in the long run and making sure that the training provided is what teachers really need to help them continue to grow. Examples include attending staff development activities with teachers, finding the right consultants and activities, planning and presenting staff development activities, recognizing and providing for the stages of learning a new teaching strategy, and arranging for faculty to observe demonstrations at other successful schools.
5. **Assessing and Monitoring Progress**—verifying that change is actually taking place and making sure that teachers have the support they need, when they need it. Examples include checking on the results of the changes so that the focus is on student learning, being visible and accessible so that the leader knows what is really going on, identifying obstacles to change, being aware of the stage of implementation of new practices, and collecting the right kind of data to make decisions about traditional training.
6. **Providing Continuous Assistance**—providing coaching and support on an ongoing basis and help as teachers work through new strategies. Examples include using data or information collected in assessing and monitoring progress to provide the most appropriate type of professional development activities, providing formal and informal interaction among faculty to talk about how the implementation of a new strategy is going, making sure that all staff development activities include follow-up and continuous support, and celebrating progress.

Three Thrusts Toward Improving School Climate

Presenter: **Dr. Charles Ahearn, Director of Publications and Senior Editor, SERVE**

In this session, presenter Dr. Charles Ahearn outlined the character of organizations using "Jungian Type" descriptors as outlined in *The Character of Organizations* (Bridges, 1992). Three thrusts toward improving school climate were characterized as district support, school enthusiasm, and appropriate intervention. The figure on page 28 was used to demonstrate their mutually interdependent relationship, and an "if-then" series of statements was discussed. Participants were invited to participate in a step-by-step comparison of school climate and culture and how the concepts of climate builders, climate stoppers, and the language of climate affect today's educational system. Climate and culture were defined as two related but distinct concepts that affect how well schools function. They play a major role in the attitudes of students, faculty, and community in shaping whether a school is considered "good" or one to avoid.

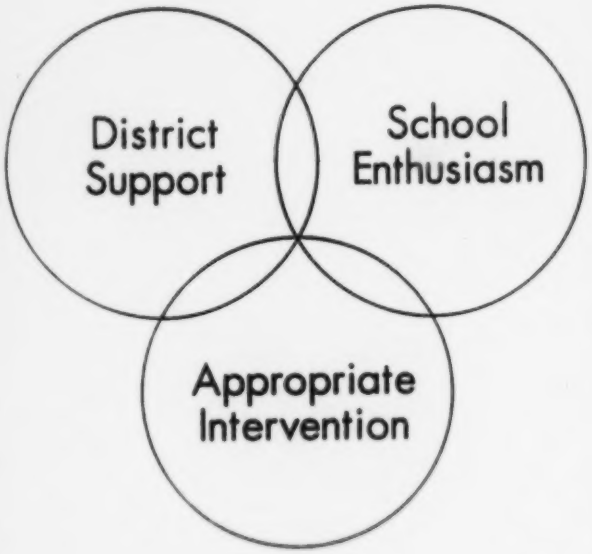
Climate

- Is composed of current feelings and attitudes
- Reflects how students, staff, and parents feel about the school
- Reflects what is happening today
- Develops from being valued
- Is a function of safety
- Is aligned with sociology

Culture

- Is a deeper, longer-term phenomenon
- Reflects deeply imbedded shared beliefs and practices that are ingrained and taken for granted
- Is difficult to define and assess
- Reflects what has evolved over time
- Involves day-to-day operations and decision-making methods
- Is aligned with anthropology

Three Thrusts Toward Improving School Climate



If District Support & School Enthusiasm but Inappropriate Intervention, **then** some Hawthorne Effect but ultimately frustration and disenchantment = short-term thinking.

If School Enthusiasm & Appropriate Intervention but NO District Support, **then** some improvement in climate but ultimately frustrating and at the cost of something else = suboptimization.

If District Support & School Enthusiasm & Appropriate Intervention, **then** improved climate accompanied by higher energy levels, a renewed feeling of professionalism, and increased progress in relation to indicators of success = optimization.

Student Assessment

For more information about Student Assessment sessions, contact Nancy McMunn, SERVE Research Specialist, at 800-755-3277.

Highlight on SERVE's R&D Assessment Partnerships: Districts Committed to Improving Assessment Practices in the Classroom

Presenters: **Beth Deluzain and others from Bay County Schools, FL**
Discussant: Mack McCary, Elizabeth City-Pasquotank Schools, NC

Presenters in this session discussed the strategies used by Bay County Schools (Fla.) to engage teachers in upgrading assessment practices to reflect new curriculum standards. Bay County Schools shared their experiences throughout their assessment partnership with SERVE. The project representatives included administrative staff and teachers from the elementary, middle, and high schools involved in the project and SERVE R&D (Research and Development) staff. Bay County participants discussed this unique three-year opportunity for their teachers to develop, implement, and critique assessment instruments and strategies used in their classrooms. Representatives from a second district, Elizabeth City-Pasquotank Schools (N.C.), reflected on the impact of several years of having support for teacher training in classroom assessment.

Sharing Resources and Assessment Examples

Presenters: **Representatives from Bay County Schools, FL; Cathi Snyder, South Carolina D.O.E.; Barbara Dougherty, Professor, University of Mississippi, Hawaii Algebra Project; Nancy McMunn, SERVE R&D**

This session provided an "open door" format for Forum participants to visit the assessment booths on display. Participants were encouraged to observe, ask questions, share information, obtain resources, and meet people actively involved in making changes in classroom assessment practices. The display booths included information on Bay County School's (Fla.) R&D Projects for elementary, middle, and high school; SERVE's R&D Projects; electronic portfolios; South Carolina D.O.E.'s Performance Assessment Project; the University of Mississippi's Algebra Project; and Senior Projects.

Session participants were informed of the various alternative assessments in science and mathematics developed by the Laboratory Network Program. In addition, a diverse

selection of Information Management Software was reviewed, including *TYCHO-Teacher Information Manager, Grady Profile Companion, Abacus, CTB Classroom Manager, The Assessor, Scholastic's Electronic Portfolio,* and *Curriculum Designer*.

The Big Bad Wolf Meets the Blooms: A Closer Look at "Quality" Assessment Practices Through Better Questioning

Presenter: Nancy McMunn, SERVE R&D

In this session, participants shared in a choral reading, "The Big, Bad Wolf Meets the Blooms," which provided an introduction to Bloom's Taxonomy. The activity also enabled participants to focus on good questioning techniques educators can use when planning and delivering lessons. Presenters highlighted the five levels of Bloom's taxonomy (Recall, Application, Analysis, Synthesis, and Evaluation) and how they relate to higher order questioning and the Spectrum of Assessment.

Participants explored the quality of assessment tasks used in the classroom and then reviewed question sets to determine where the questions fit on a spectrum from traditional to alternative types of assessment. The discussions included suggestions on how to use the group task to involve students in asking better questions.

What is Valued in Student Learning? A Closer Look at Rubrics

Presenters: Nancy McMunn, SERVE R&D;
Sara Thompson, English Teacher, Iredell County Schools, NC

Presenters in this session led participants through a hands-on activity, using actual student work to decide what is important in student learning. This activity can be used in schools to determine what teachers value in many subject areas. Once the criteria were agreed upon by the group of participants, a rubric was created and the rubric style and grading method were discussed. Participants left with an understanding of the importance of using rubrics as instructional tools and gathered numerous rubric resources and examples.

Rubrics, for educational assessment purposes, are defined as scoring guides containing the criteria used to evaluate a student's performance in a given area. The following four types of rubrics were described:

- **Generalized**—scoring guides that use criteria that are non-specific for a given task and can be used to score other tasks (these guides may be analytical or holistic in design)
- **Task Specific Rubrics**—scoring guides that can only be used for one single task, because specific criteria are considered and cannot be used to score other tasks (these guides may be analytical or holistic in design)
- **Holistic**—scoring guides that respond to a student's work as a whole; assigning a single score or description of quality based on clearly defined criteria (these guides may be generalized or task specific in design)
- **Analytical**—scoring guides that respond separately to each of the key qualities or dimensions of the student's work; assigning individual score or quality descriptions for each dimension (these guides may be generalized or task specific in design)

Presenters also focused on checklists and the point system as rubrics.

- **Point System**—A point system assigns points for certain features of the student's response. Open-ended questions are often scored with this approach because points can reflect partial, as well as full, credit for a response.
- **Checklists**—A checklist can be used to indicate that a student has effectively completed the steps involved in a task or demonstration. Checklists may be applied to written work (e.g., journals) or observable behavior.

Good Grades: Grading Practices which Encourage Effective Learning

Presenter: Ken O'Connor, Scarborough Board of Education, Ontario, Canada

Teachers are effectively linking an increasingly broad range of assessment and evaluation approaches with their teaching to improve learning. The next challenge is to link this broad-based assessment to grading practices in order to make grades meaningful. In this interactive session, presenters examined grading practices and principles that capitalize on new assessment practices, encourage effective learning, and support student success.

Participants were provided with the following guidelines for grading that support learning and success (listed in order of importance, but each considered a part of the whole):

1. Distinguish between achievement and personal attributes on the reporting instrument.
   - Achievement should be the only basis for grades (not poor effort, misbehavior, tardiness, etc.).

- Effort, participation, attitude, and other personal/social characteristics should be reported separately.

2. Sample student performance—don't mark everything.
   - Mark or provide feedback on formative "performance."
   - Include only summative "performance" in grades.
3. Grade in pencil (so that old information can easily be replaced by the most recent summative information).
   - Use the most recent information.
   - Provide a second (or more) assessment opportunity.
4. Relate grading procedures to the intended learning (outcomes).
5. Use care in "crunching" numbers.
   - The average doesn't have to be the mean; consider using medians.
   - Weigh marks carefully to achieve intent in final grades.
6. Use absolute or pre-set standards to distribute grades (and marks).
7. Properly record evidence from quality assessment instruments.
   - Describe assessment and evaluation practices, including grading, to students at the beginning of instruction.

In materials given to session participants, presenter Ken O'Connor writes

> "Teach; test; teach; test; average the marks and report." For many of us, that is what assessment, evaluation, and grading have meant in our classrooms. Recently, however, an interesting phenomenon has developed. Assessment and evaluation practices have begun to change dramatically, and teachers are learning to place performance and demonstration at the heart of their assessment repertoire. They have come to see that assessment and evaluation are integral to the learning process, not just a means to generate marks for report cards.
>
> Grading, however, has remained largely untouched by the new way that data on student progress are generated. The tension between the new and the old is evident in the titles of recent articles in educators' journals such as *"It's a good score!" "Just a bad grade,"* and *"Are letter grades obsolete?"*
>
> We need a set of guiding principles which will clearly indicate how the grading task can be aligned to the current, progressive philosophy of assessment and evaluation.

What is Alternative Assessment? A Hands-On Awareness Session

Presenters: Nancy McMunn and Paula Egelson, SERVE R&D; Bay County School Teachers (FL); Cathi Snyder, South Carolina D.O.E.; Sara Thompson, English Teacher, Iredell County Schools, NC; Barbara Dougherty, Professor, University of Mississippi, Hawaii Algebra Project

The goal of this session was to promote an awareness of the role of alternative assessment in the classroom. Participants discovered that the way a student is assessed determines the types of pictures a teacher acquires of student knowledge and performance. Representatives from the southern states related their assessment stories and offered samples of the different types of assessment. Participants were also given an opportunity to visit with and obtain resources from these representatives.

Presenters defined assessment as "the act of collecting information about individuals or groups of individuals in order to understand them better."

There are two types of assessment:

(1) Traditional—Any type of assessment in which students choose a response from a given list (true/false, multiple choice, matching, etc.)
(2) Alternative—Any type of assessment in which students create a response to a question (essays, open-ended, portfolios, projects, journals, exhibitions, notebooks, interviews, performance assessments, etc.)

Teacher Research

For more information about Teacher Research sessions, contact Paula Egelson, SERVE Senior Research Specialist, at 800-755-3277, or Elizabeth Clark, SERVE Information Research Services Manager, at 800-352-6001.

SERVE's Formative Teacher Evaluation Program Overview

Presenter: Paula Egelson, Senior Research Specialist, SERVE

In this session, Dr. Paula Egelson provided an overview of SERVE's formative teacher evaluation program and outlined ways to become a SERVE formative teacher evaluation site. Since 1991, SERVE researchers have performed applied research in the area of formative teacher evaluation. As a result of this research, the document *Designing Teacher Evaluation Systems that Support Professional Growth* was written by SERVE staff members Dr. Wendy McColskey and Dr. Egelson. SERVE has also provided interested school systems in the Southeast with training and seed money to develop and implement teacher evaluation plans. Presently there are ten SERVE alternative teacher evaluation sites in North and South Carolina including Guilford County (N.C.), Surry County (N.C.), Richland Two (S.C.), Lee County (N.C.), Rockingham County (N.C.), Rowan-Salisbury (N.C.), Watauga County (N.C.), Pitt County (N.C.), Asheville City (N.C.), and Polk County (N.C.). Sites in Alabama, Georgia, and Mississippi will be added in 1997.

Dr. Egelson noted the following advantages of formative evaluation: greater collegiality among staff members, more collaboration, increased professionalism, increased motivation, directed focus on improving teaching, and positive student outcomes.

Focus on Formative Teacher Evaluation: A Conversation with Daniel Duke

Presenters: Daniel Duke, Professor of Educational Leadership and Director, Thomas Jefferson Center for Educational Design, University of Virginia

Referring to his recent books, *A Case for Commitment to Teacher Growth* and *Teacher Evaluation Policy: From Accountability to Professional Development*, Dr. Daniel Duke, Professor of Educational Leadership and Director, Thomas Jefferson Center for Educational Design, University of Virginia, discussed the topic, "How can teacher evaluation be restructured to promote professional growth?" Beginning with a review of recent trends in teacher evaluation practice, Dr. Duke showed how school systems throughout the United States and Canada are modifying conventional practice to encourage teacher growth.

Duke noted the following key differences between professional development and staff development:

Professional Development
- Is designed for individuals
- Fosters the cultivation of uniqueness
- Is guided by the individual's judgment
- Leads to increased personal awareness

Staff Development
- Is designed for groups
- Is guided by school and district goals
- Focuses on similarities
- Encourages growth in common direction
- Leads to an enhanced repertoire of skills and concepts

Dr. Duke's model for professional development served as the basis for a discussion of the steps involved in restructuring teacher evaluation. These steps include policy changes to create multi-track teacher evaluation systems and training in professional development goal setting. In addition, Dr. Duke outlined the seven components of an effective professional development plan:

- STEP 1: Awareness-building
- STEP 2: Reflection
- STEP 3: Goal selection
- STEP 4: Development of a plan
- STEP 5: Implementation of a plan
- STEP 6: Evaluation of progress
- STEP 7: Sharing of results (optional)

So You Want To Do Action Research?

Presenters: Samuel A. Spiegel, Project Director of Science FEAT (Science For Early Adolescence Teachers), Florida State University, Tallahassee, FL; Dr. Barbara Grover, Professor of Mathematics, Ohio University (presenter of the Thinking Mathematics Project); Paul Veldman, Teacher, Sulphur Springs Elementary School, Tampa, FL; Becky DeWitt, Teacher, Cypress Elementary School, Clermont, FL

This informative session was geared toward teachers and other practitioners interested in learning more about action research as an approach to changing practice in mathematics and science education. Presenters focused on a series

of mathematics publications that are currently available to help teachers in their classrooms. *Thinking Mathematics*, published by the American Federation of Teachers, highlights the Thinking Mathematics program, a research-based, teacher-developed, union-sponsored approach to teaching mathematics which is geared particularly for grades K-6.

The session included presentations from the Science FEAT program from Florida State University. Participants had the opportunity to engage in discussions with representatives of these programs as well as teachers currently involved in action research.

Roundtable Discussions: Formative Teacher Evaluation Plans

Presenters: **Paula Egelson, Senior Research Specialist, SERVE; Linda Perry, Instructional Supervisor, Edenton, NC; Ellen Ringer, Teacher, Rose High School, Greenville, NC; Jolane Hall, Lead Teacher, South Carolina; Clayton Nations, Teacher, Leaksville-Spray Elementary School, Eden, NC**

In this session, preliminary evaluation findings from six SERVE formative teacher evaluation sites were presented and discussed. Educators from other systems informally described their formative teacher evaluation plans. Specifically, Linda Perry discussed the collegial study group and panel review components of the Edenton-Chowan plan, Ellen Ringer described instructional improvement strategies associated with Pitt County's plan, Jolane Hall of Richland II introduced peer coaching strategies, and Clayton Nations of Rockingham County provided examples of teacher portfolios.

Teachers Becoming Successful Search Mediators of Educational Databases Through Problem Solving Strategies

Presenters: **Victoria Jenkins, Media Specialist and Stephen Alford, Teacher, Grady High School, Atlanta, GA; Tena Stevens, Media Specialist, Pickneyville Middle School, Norcross, GA; Nancy Johnson, Marketing Director, ERIC Document Reproduction Service (EDRS), Springfield, VA**

Facilitator: Elizabeth Clark-Claytor, SERVE Information Services Manager, Tallahassee, FL

Presenters in this hands-on training session directed participants how to perform successful self-searches of the ERIC Database and the Internet to access research-based information to help with classroom and curriculum decisions. Participants were provided with a road map to ERIC full-text document (ED) delivery and journals (EJ), including current modernization activities, and received new information on the prospects of obtaining ED documents in electronic format. As a preamble to the training session, a participant team from the Model On-Site Training Project, jointly sponsored by SERVE and the National Diffusion Network School Improvement Program, modeled effective questioning strategies and demonstrated their experiences in becoming self-searchers at their respective schools. Participants came with a problem on an educational topic and received instructions on retrieving information that addressed the problem. Presenters also described the work of SERVE's Database Information Services Clearinghouse (DISC). Since 1991, DISC has provided a computerized literature search service originally available only to practicing educators. Its services are now open to the general public.

Technology

For more information about Technology sessions, contact Curt Cearly, SERVE Coordinator of Constituent Services, at 800-659-3204, or Jean Williams, Director of the Professional Development Institute (PDI) at 910-334-4667.

The Impact of Technology on Parents and Community Involvement

Presenters: Ladd Skelly, Supervisor of Instructional Technology, Sarasota County Schools, FL; Mike Horan, Network Specialist, Sarasota County Schools, FL; Jill Kolb, Teacher, Laurel Nokomis School, Nokomis, FL; Sue Taskey, Technical Support, Brentwood Elementary School, Sarasota, FL

In this session, presenters examined the manner and methods by which technology can connect schools directly to the homes of students, other schools, and the community at large. Participants reviewed Sarasota County Schools' (Fla.) methods of using existing infrastructures as well as state-of-the-art connections to inform and involve parents in their children's education. District-wide instructional management systems, community technology training, cable access from school to home, authentic assessment, and education web sites were discussed in detail.

Five different types of parents of today's students were highlighted: decision makers, supporters, audience members, collaborators, and partners. Each of the parental categories represents a varied dedication to their child's educational progress. The benefits of such family involvement include

- High student grades and test scores
- Long-term academic achievement
- Positive student attitudes and behavior
- More successful educational programs
- More effective schools

One main focus of the session was on assessment tools, in particular, Abacus. Abacus is a computerized instructional management system that includes a model curriculum in all core curriculum areas aligned with an assessment database. The software provides for the input of instructional lessons, district curriculum design development, and test generation, scoring, and reporting. The following questions were answered:

How does Abacus benefit students?

- Provides instant feedback on performance and progress
- Provides opportunity to work up to their potential
- Provides individualized instruction that is easier to manage
- Provides personalized learning plan

How does Abacus benefit teachers?

- Gives the opportunity to view student progress quickly and accurately
- Allows teachers to observe student progress against established goals
- Allows the ability to focus instruction based on student needs

How does Abacus benefit parents?

- Allows parents to clearly understand their child's educational goals and how they are progressing
- Allows parents to become and integral part of their child's educational team

Abacus will be implemented in three pilot schools in Sarasota County for the 1996-97 school year. The remaining 32 schools will be included by the year 2000. Expectations are high for this cutting-edge educational tool.

Presenters further emphasized the need for parents to become students themselves, using Sarasota's Brentwood Elementary Computer Awareness Class as an example. Brentwood has run the instructional session successfully for seven years and has serviced more than 900 parents. Through six- to eight-week classes of "hands-on" learning of basic computer skills at no cost to participants, the program helped bridge the technological gap between students and their parents.

Integrating Technology with Curriculum

Presenters: Christopher Hopey, Project Coordinator, National Center for Adult Literacy, University of Pennsylvania; Jeff Sun, Technology Consultant, Andover, MA

Presenters in this hands-on workshop provided participants with the concepts and ideas necessary to integrate today's modern technology into classroom curriculum. Discussing everything from one-way distance learning and broadcast television use to advanced computer applications such as the Internet, Integrated Learning Systems (ILS), word processors, graphics programs, and hypermedia tools (*HyperCard, Hyperstudio, HTML, etc.*), presenters explored the abundance of benefits of integrating this technology in education.

Four main categories of technology used in schools were highlighted:

- **Technologies for Tutorial Learning**—Technology is used in a tutorial fashion when it does the teaching directly, in the style of a lecture or an electronic workbook. Students using tutorial systems are presented with information which they are expected to practice, emulate, and replicate. Questions are posed about the material presented, and students enter their answers into the system for review, correction, and assessment.
- **Technologies for Exploratory Learning**—Backed by a belief that learning is most effective when it arises out of exploration and discovery, this group of technologies supports a highly constructivist approach to education. Students, in this view of learning, are self-directed and discover facts, principles, and concepts as they manipulate and maneuver through databases, simulated environments, or complex scenarios.
- **Technologies as Applications**—The next category of technologies represents an even more significant shift in the way technologies are viewed in the educational arena. Specifically, student use of applications within the course of classroom work indicates a trend away from the notion of technology as an instructional delivery mechanism and toward the idea of technology as a tool to help students complete their work.
- **Technologies for Communication**—Communication technologies are considered to be those that enable students and teachers at different locations to send, receive, and share information in various forms. The more sophisticated of these forms includes the sharing of visual information from site to site, whereas a far more common type of communication involves only the transfer of written text, such as electronic mail or file sharing.

Session participants were informed about the *Learning and Technology Interface*, an evaluation tool developed by researchers at the North Central Regional Education Laboratory (NCREL) that was designed to link specific types or categories of technology with the learning experience that each provides. In addition, presenters highlighted a variety of educational research sites on the World Wide Web ranging from subject-specific sites in math, English, and science to more generic locations covering subjects such as news, politics, foreign language studies, and entertainment.

Selecting and Evaluating Instructional Software

Presenters: **Christopher Hopey, Project Coordinator, National Center for Adult Literacy, University of Pennsylvania; Jeff Sun, Technology Consultant, Andover, MA**

Presenters in this hands-on workshop covered the step-by-step process of evaluating and choosing instructional software for classroom use. Deciding which software programs to use in an educational setting is difficult and requires making choices and trade-offs among quality, compatibility, objectives, and instructional goals. Designed for both teachers and curriculum developers, the workshop included summaries of the educational software based on the following characteristics:

- General applicability and usefulness
- Feedback for students
- Learning objectives, goals, and outcomes
- Teacher modifiability
- Appropriateness
- Evaluation and record-keeping
- Questioning techniques
- Documentation and support
- Ability to motivate students
- Technical quality
- Creativity
- Hardware and marketing issues
- User control
- Content

Participants also reviewed a series of Internet sites for educational software and software reviews. The World Wide Web sites often allowed users to view sample versions of products, receive catalogs and new product announcements, or order software.

Planning and Funding Technology for Teaching and Learning

Presenters: **Christopher Hopey, Project Coordinator, National Center for Adult Literacy, University of Pennsylvania; Jeff Sun, Technology Consultant, Andover, MA**

Presenters in this workshop highlighted the concepts, skills, and ideas necessary to engage in a technology planning process and develop a technology plan for schools and districts. To effectively assist participants with this goal, presenters in this workshop session outlined the following guidelines:

- Develop your vision of learning.
- Decide how to use technology to support this vision.
- Develop a supportive infrastructure.
- Understand the context of your technology plan.
- Garner public support from community and business environment.
- Implement your technology plan.
- Evaluate the implementation of your technology plan.

Presenters reviewed several sample technology plan vision statements to provide participants with a framework for creating their own technology plan. In addition, a variety of informational resources were highlighted, including sites from the World Wide Web and popular print resources.

Internet Access and Impact on Technology and Learning

Presenter: Linda Clifton, Principal, Booneville Middle School, Booneville, MS

In this session, presenter Linda Clifton described the efforts of Booneville Middle School (Miss.) to harness several initiatives for the leveraging of the school's acquisition of technologies. Recognizing the impact of easily accessible information for students, school administrators emphasized solid planning and a clear vision for the future, a combination that has moved the school forward and provided many opportunities for improving access and equity among students. Mrs. Clifton described the school's technology acquisition plan, the various initiatives used to build a comprehensive program, and the results experienced to this point. In addition, she highlighted their professional development plan in place for teacher learning and growth.

Web Sites by Subject Area

English/Language Arts

Complete Works of Shakespeare
http://the-tech.mit.edu/Shakespeare/works.html

Children's Literature Web Guide
http://www.ucalgary.ca/~dkbrown/index.html

Native American Literature
http://www.indians.org/welker/natlit.htm

Multicultural Book Review
http://www.isomedia.com/homes/jmele/homepage.html

Medieval English Literature
http://www.alchemyweb.com/~alchemy/englit/medlit/

Resources for English Teachers
http://nickel.ucs.indiana.edu/~lwolfgra/english.html
http://www.csun.edu/~vceed009/languagearts.html

Math

Ask Dr. Math
forum.swarthmore.edu/dr.math/dr-math.html

History of Mathematics Archive-Searchable Database
http://www-groups.dcs.st-and.ac.uk/~history/

Mathematics Lessons Database
http://www.mste.uiuc.edu/mathed/queryform.html

Mathematics Standards On Line
http://www.mcrel.org/connect/math.html

Math Resources for Educators
http://www.csun.edu/~vceed009/math.html

Math Lesson Plans from ERIC
http://www.ncrel.org/msc/sciweb.html

Science

NASA
http://www.nasa.gov

Sea World Animal Information Database
http://www.bev.net/education/SeaWorld/homepage. html

Smithsonian Air and Space Museum
http://www.nasm.edu

Cascades Volcano Observatory
http://vulcan.wr.usgs.gov/home.html

Chemistry Related Resources for High School Students
http://www.mbhs.edu/~pham/chem.html

Rainforest Action Network
http://www.ran.org

Earth Science Resources (Environment, Weather, Geography, etc.)
http://www.ems.psu.edu/RelatedWebSites.html

EE-Link: Environmental Education on the Internet
http://www.nceet.snre.umich.edu/

Museums on Line
http://www.cs.reading.ac.uk/vlmp/lists.html

Science Learning Network
http://www.sln.org/

Science Lesson Plans from ERIC
http://www.ncrel.org/msc/sciweb.html

Social Studies

The Oregon Trail
http://www.isu.edu/~trinmich/Oregontrail.html

Geographic Information Center
http://www.lib.virginia.edu/gic

U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum
http://www.ushmm.org

Cybrary of the Holocaust
http://remember.org

Letters Home from a Civil War Soldier
http://www.ucsc.edu/civil-war-letters/home.html

American Civil War Home Page
http://funnelweb.utcc.utk.edu/~hoemann/cwarho.html

Black History Month Resources
http://socialstudies.com/feb/blackhistory.html

Ellis Island
http://www.i-channel.com/ellis

History and Social Studies Resources for Teachers
http://execpc.com/~dboals/boals.html

History Resources and Standards
http://www.mcrel.org/connect/history.html

Social Studies Lesson Plans
http://www.csun.edu/~vceed009/socialstudies.html

State Facts
http://phoenix.ans.se/freeweb/holly/state.html

U.S. History Resources for Teachers
http://www.kent.wednet.edu/curriculum/soc_studies/soc_studies.html

Foreign Language

Foreign Language Teaching Forum
http://www.cortland.edu/http://www_root/flteach/flteach.html

Foreign Language Resources and Standards
http://www.mcrel.org/connect/foreign.html

Curriculum Resources for Spanish Language Teaching
http://ladb.umn.edu
http://www/retanet

List of Web Servers in France
http://web.urec.fr/docs
http://www_list_fr.html

Latin America on the Net
http://www.latinworld.com

Spain and Spanish on the Net
http://gias720.dis.ulpgc.es/spain.html

Discover Spain
http://www.spaintour.com

Other interesting sites to visit

The CNN News Page
http://www.cnn.com

The New York Times on the Web
http://www.nytimes.com

USA Today
http://www.usatoday.com

The White House
http://www.whitehouse.gov

Democratic National Committee
http://www.democrats.org

RepublicanNationalCommittee
http://www.rnc.org

Team Planning Time

Monday and Tuesday
4:30-5:00 pm

Reflecting on new information, new insights, and new applications of familiar concepts and strategies for school improvement is an essential component of professional growth and development that leads to continual improvement. Special team planning times scheduled as the last sessions on Monday and Tuesday of the Forum were designed to promote group reflection among participants who were attending as a team, as well as those who were the sole representative of their school or organization.

Participants from each of the six states in the region were assigned a meeting room for this block of time. A facilitator assisted each group in getting started with a discussion of the presentations and interactions that they wished to reflect upon.

Wednesday Morning Meetings

State-By-State Meetings
8:30-11:15 am

These sessions were designed to provide an opportunity for participants to meet with representatives from their own state education agency and interact on school improvement issues, initiatives, and needs. The state-by-state meetings provided an opportunity for participants to become better acquainted with resources and assistance available from five U.S. Department of Education-funded service providers (Region V Comprehensive Assistance Center, Region XIV Comprehensive Assistance Center, SouthEast and Islands Regional Technology in Education Consortium at SERVE, Southeastern Equity Center, and Eisenhower Consortium for Mathematics and Science Education at SERVE) in the southeast region.

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1997 Forum Registration

SERVE is currently making plans for its next Regional Forum on School Improvement, scheduled for October 12-14, 1997, at the Sheraton Colony Square Hotel in Atlanta, Georgia. This year's learning event will revolve around the following strands that comprise the critical elements of school improvement in which the SERVE Laboratory is frequently asked to assist schools, districts, state education agencies, and other clients:

- Curriculum and Instruction
- Parent Involvement and Early Childhood Education
- Professional Development
- School Improvement and Accountability
- School Organization and Climate
- Student Assessment
- Teacher Leadership
- Technology for Teaching and Learning

In addition, a series of pre-conference workshops will provide in-depth training and assistance in areas such as collaboration, conflict resolution, effective schools, teacher leadership, and facilitative leadership. These will be offered on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, October 10-12, also at the Sheraton Colony Square. Combined with the Forum's feature presentations from a group of nationally recognized keynote speakers, extensive networking and group sharing possibilities, and access to the variety of programs, products, and publications SERVE offers, these workshops should help make the 1997 SERVE Regional Forum on School Improvement as successful as the first.

We're looking for eager and energetic educators to be part of the 1997 Forum. If you are interested, please fill out the following pre-registration form, tear it off, and mail it to

Betty Fry, SERVE Deputy Executive Director
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The 1997 SERVE Regional Forum on School Improvement

Sheraton Colony Square Hotel
Atlanta, Georgia
October 12-14, 1997

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Registration fees are not refundable after September 1, 1997. Individual participants are responsible for reservations/cancellations for hotel accommodations.

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